

INSULATING SLEEVE FOR A GLASS

Field of the Invention.

5 The present invention relates to coolers for drinks and in particular to an insulating sleeve for a glass for maintaining the temperature of a drink when in a glass, for example a wine glass.

Background Art.

10 Cooling sleeves for drinks and drink containers are quite well known. In particular, cooling sleeves for beer bottles (stubbies) or drink cans are well known. When first used, these types of coolers were manufactured from polystyrene and were rigid tube-shaped sleeves with a fixed diameter opening for holding the drink.

15 A later development was directed towards solving the problem that the polystyrene coolers were brittle and were easily damaged. The development comprised the provision of a rigid plastic sleeve around the polystyrene cooler to provide protection for the cooler. The plastic was generally printed with a pattern.

20 A further development of coolers was the neoprene cooler for bottles. These coolers were formed from tubes of neoprene, either with or without a base wall. Due to the resilient nature of neoprene, the cooler was dimensioned to be slightly smaller in diameter than the bottle or can it was to contain and therefore the cooler is slightly deformed as the bottle or can is inserted therein and holds the container tightly
25 therein.

 These neoprene coolers have been used in the past for individual bottles and cans and elongated versions have been provided for holding more than one bottle or can.

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 Not all persons are comfortable drinking directly from a can or bottle. This is particularly the case where a drink may be served in a bottle or other container

which holds more than one serving of drink, for example a larger bottle or wine bottle.

It is particularly evident that when drinking wine, glasses are used. These glasses suffer from the same or similar disadvantages as a bottle suffers, namely cooling or heating of the contents of the glass according to the ambient temperature. The change in temperature may be further contributed to by a person's body heat when holding a glass for extended periods. Wine glasses and other glasses with stems are particularly problematic as the bowl of the glass may be spaced from the base of the glass such that conventional coolers for bottles and cans cannot be used with stemmed glasses.

It is also quite well known to provide disposable (usually paper or cardboard) members that can be placed around a hot glass or cup to prevent burning of the person's fingers. These members may comprise simple annular strips that are placed around the cup. More sophisticated versions comprise stiff paper folded in a particular manner to extend about the cup and also to provide a degree of insulating to the person's fingers. It is also known to provide a simple insulated tube that extends about the cup and is gripped by the person's fingers to prevent the cup from slipping out of the tube.

All of these suffer from disadvantages in that the members are not reusable, do not hold the cup securely (or put differently, do not snugly fit about the cup), and most of these members are designed to prevent burning of the person's fingers but are not particularly designed to insulate the contents of the cup.

A need therefore exists for a simple, cheap, portable insulating sleeve which is particularly adapted for use with glasses, for example wine glasses.

It will be clearly understood that, if a prior art publication is referred to herein, this reference does not constitute an admission that the publication forms part of the common general knowledge in the art in Australia or in any other country.

Summary of the Invention.

The present invention is directed to an insulating sleeve for a glass which may at least partially overcome at least one of the abovementioned disadvantages or provide the consumer with a useful or commercial choice.

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In one form, the invention resides in an insulating sleeve for a drinking glass of the type having a stem and a bowl, the sleeve adapted to extend about the glass and comprising insulating material, the sleeve having an upper opening and a lower opening, the upper opening having a peripheral edge which, in use, extends about the bowl of the glass, the lower opening being smaller than the upper opening and adapted to extend about the stem of the glass, the sleeve having an elongate releasable closure means extending from one said opening and adjacent to but spaced from the other said opening to allow the one said opening to be enlarged prior to receiving the glass and then reduced so that the sleeve snugly receives the glass therein.

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Suitably, the elongate releasable closure extends from the lower opening and adjacent to but spaced below the upper opening to allow the lower opening to be enlarged prior to receiving the glass.

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Suitably, the elongate closure is a zip.

Suitably the upper opening of the sleeve comprises an edge of a band, the band, in use, extending about the bowl of the glass, the band being elastic to fit snugly about the bowl.

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Suitably the insulating material is elastic to enable it to stretch to accommodate bowls of different sizes and to enable the sleeve to fit snugly about the bowl.

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Suitably the lower opening, prior to enlargement, has a diameter of between 1-20 millimetres.

In a broader form, the invention comprises an insulating sleeve for a drinking vessel, the sleeve having an upper opening and a lower opening which are spaced apart, the upper opening and the lower opening having a peripheral edge which, in use, extends about a part of the vessel, the sleeve having an elongate releasable closure means extending from the lower opening and adjacent to but below the upper opening to allow the lower opening to be enlarged to facilitate attachment of the sleeve to the drinking vessel.

10 In a broader form, the invention comprises an insulating sleeve for a drinking vessel, the sleeve having an upper opening and a lower opening which are spaced apart, the upper opening having a peripheral edge which, in use, extends about a part of the vessel, the sleeve having a releasable closure means extending from the to allow the sleeve to be enlarged to facilitate attachment of the sleeve to the drinking
15 vessel.

In use, the invention may find particular application when used with wine or other stemmed glasses.

20 According to a preferred embodiment, the insulated sleeve may define a large opening therein in order to allow the rim of the bowl of the glass to be available to a user to drink from. A second smaller opening may be defined to accommodate the stem of the glass. The insulated sleeve of this embodiment may therefore be adapted to insulate or cover the bowl of the glass, but leave the remainder
25 of the glass, particularly the stem and foot of the glass free.

The insulating sleeve may be shaped to accommodate glasses having different shapes. For example, it is known that white wine glasses are shaped differently to red wine glasses which are shaped differently to glasses used for champagne or other sparkling wine varieties. The shape of the body member may be
30 shaped to correspond to the shape of the bowl of the glasses with which it will mainly be used.

The insulating material used may preferably be neoprene which is a synthetic rubber, but other resilient insulating materials may be used. Neoprene has a high resistance to heat and petroleum based products, and was first used for hoses and insulation for cables. Due to its flexibility, durability and insulation properties, it has found particular application as a material for wet suits.

The neoprene used in the manufacture of the insulating sleeve may feature "shape memory". If the item is squashed, it will pop back into shape in a short time. The body of the insulating sleeve may suitably be slightly smaller than the bowl of the glass with which it is used in order to provide a snug fit of the bowl of the glass in the body member.

The material may be used in differing thicknesses and be available in thickness ranging from 2mm to 10mm, depending on the product. Preferably, the thickness will be about 3mm.

The body member may be covered on both sides by coloured absorbent jersey or other material in order to provide additional protection, grip enhancing qualities or aesthetic qualities.

The body member may be formed from a substantially planar member which may be folded, wrapped or even sewn into shape. The body member may for example, be wrapped about the bowl of the glass and secured about the bowl by clips, zips, Velcro or any other attachment means.

According to a particularly preferred embodiment, the body member may be formed of two substantially similar planar portions. The two planar portions may be sewn together along an edge of each. The opposing edges may be associated with one another to define the at least one opening to receive a glass. The association may be made using a releasable closure means such as a zip, one or more clips or Velcro. Preferably, the closure means may be adapted to allow the at least one

opening in the body member to be enlarged prior to receiving the glass and then reduced so that the body member snugly receives the glass therein.

5 The portions of the body member may be glued together using a two part neoprene adhesive. Alternatively, the portions may be sewn together to form a more durable association. The seams so formed by sewing may be zigzag or overlocking stitching, depending on the product. A strong thread may be used, preferably of polyester/cotton blend.

10 The body member may include piping or edging to enhance the durability or aesthetic qualities. The piping may be between 5mm and 20mm in width depending on the product. The piping may be attached to the body member by overlocking using a polyester/cotton blend stitching.

15 According to a particularly preferred embodiment, the closure means may be or comprise a zip. The zip may be light or heavy duty, depending on the size of the product and the thickness of the sleeve.

20 The zip may be a nylon or plastic zip, having a metal slider. It may be attached adjacent to an edge of the portions using a running or overlocking stitching.

Brief Description of the Drawings.

An embodiment of the invention will be described with reference to the following drawings, in which:

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Figure 1 illustrates a set of three wine glasses of different sizes and illustrates three different insulating sleeves to accommodate the three glasses.

30 Figure 2 illustrates the same insulating sleeves from the other side and now particularly showing the elongate closure (the zip) in each insulating sleeve.

Figure 3 illustrates a close-up view of an insulating sleeve around a

wine glass and in the "open" position.

Figure 4 illustrates a view similar to that of figure 3 but without the wine glass.

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Figure 5 illustrates an inverted view of the insulating sleeve with a zip in the closed position and particularly showing the smaller opening.

Figure 6 illustrates a view similar to that of figure 5 but this time with the insulating sleeve in the "unzipped" position.

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Detailed Description of the Invention.

Referring to the illustrations and initially to figures 1 and 2, there is illustrated a set of three wine glasses 10-12 each of different size. Attached to each wine glass is an insulating sleeve 13-15 according to an embodiment of the invention. Thus, it is clearly illustrated that the insulating sleeve can be of various shapes and sizes to accommodate different types of wine glasses or other types of drinking vessels.

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Figure 2 illustrates the other side of the insulating sleeves and particularly illustrates the elongate closure member which, in the particular embodiment, comprises a zip 16. However, it is envisaged that other types of closure members may be provided.

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Referring to figure 3, there is illustrated in greater detail an insulating sleeve. The insulating sleeve is made of synthetic cushioning material which is slightly elastic and therefore enables the sleeve to be slightly stretched to snugly fit around a wine glass. The sleeve is cushioned and therefore it is preferred that the sleeve has a thickness of between 1-10mm and preferably between 3-6mm to provide a good cushioning and also a good insulating effect. The cushioning material can also protect the glass against breakage should the glass be tipped over and therefore protects against sharp glass edges that may be present if the glass breaks. This is a

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feature not found in many existing disposable holders which are typically made from paper. The insulating sleeve may therefore also be suitable for use with glasses or cups to be held by children, invalid people, people with arthritic conditions, etc.

5 In the particular embodiment, the insulating material is neoprene which may also comprise "wet suit" material.

In the particular embodiment, the insulating sleeve is made in two pieces that are joined together typically by stitching to provide the sleeve.

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The insulating sleeve has an upper opening 17 and a lower opening 18, and a side wall 19 that has a variable length but will typically have a length of between 5-12cm depending on the size of the glass. The diameter of the upper opening can vary but will typically be between 5-10cm again depending on the size of the glass. The upper opening comprises an upper edge of a circumferential band 20 that is elastic to some degree and therefore assists in gripping the glass to hold the insulating sleeve to the glass. The circumferential band 20 may also assist in preventing drips from contacting the person's hand.

20 The entire insulating sleeve is also somewhat elastic to enable it to fit glasses having slightly different sizes which means that relatively few different sleeves can fit most glasses. The elastic expansion will be between 5-20%.

25 The insulating sleeve has a lower opening 18 which is adapted in the particular embodiment to fit around the stem 21 of the wine glass. Therefore, the lower opening can be quite small and will typically have a "closed" diameter of between 1-10mm as will be described in greater detail below.

30 The insulating sleeve comprises an elongate releasable closure member which in the particular embodiment comprises the zip 16. Zip 16 extends from and communicates with the lower opening 18 and extends up to but below band 20. When the zip is in the open position (see figure 3, 4 and 6), the lower opening 18 is enlarged

and the entire insulating sleeve can be opened up to enable a wine glass to pass into the sleeve. When the zip is in the closed position (see figure 2, figure 5), the insulating sleeve fits snugly about the wine glass.

5 Figure 5 shows the zip in the closed position and shows the insulating sleeve in the upside-down position and particularly illustrates that the lower opening 18 is quite small when the zip is closed.

10 In use, the zip is opened and the sleeve can be easily fitted about a wine glass. The zip can then be closed to fit the insulating sleeve snugly about the wine glass.

15 The insulating sleeve will keep wine or other liquid in the glass from heating up or cooling down (depending on the ambient temperature) for longer than would be otherwise possible. The insulating sleeve will also improve the grip of the persons fingers on the wine glass. The insulating sleeve, when used with hot beverages, will prevent burning of the person's fingers.

20 The insulating sleeve can be easily removed by opening the zip and pulling the sleeve downwardly and over stem 21. Thus, the insulating sleeve does not need to touch the drinking rim of the wine glass.

25 In the particular embodiment, the arrangement of the elongate closure (zip) is such that the insulating sleeve cannot be opened completely up into a flat state. It is found that this enables the sleeve to be more quickly attached and removed from the glass and enables this to be done in a one-handed operation.

30 The portions of the body member are sewn together to form a more durable association. The seams so formed by sewing may be zigzag or overlocking stitching, depending on the product. A strong thread may be used, preferably of polyester/cotton blend.

The body member also includes piping or edging to enhance the durability or aesthetic qualities. The piping is attached to the body member by overlocking using a polyester/cotton blend stitching.

5 The zip 16 is a nylon or plastic zip, having a metal slider. It is attached adjacent to an edge of the portions using a running or overlocking stitching.

 In the present specification and claims, the word "comprising" and its derivatives including "comprises" and "comprise" include each of the stated integers
10 but does not exclude the inclusion of one or more further integers.

 Reference throughout this specification to "one embodiment" or "an embodiment" means that a particular feature, structure, or characteristic described in connection with the embodiment is included in at least one embodiment of the present
15 invention. Thus, the appearance of the phrases "in one embodiment" or "in an embodiment" in various places throughout this specification are not necessarily all referring to the same embodiment. Furthermore, the particular features, structures, or characteristics may be combined in any suitable manner in one or more combinations.

20 In compliance with the statute, the invention has been described in language more or less specific to structural or methodical features. It is to be understood that the invention is not limited to specific features shown or described since the means herein described comprises preferred forms of putting the invention into effect. The invention is, therefore, claimed in any of its forms or modifications
25 within the proper scope of the appended claims appropriately interpreted by those skilled in the art.